THE AUGUR

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INTRODUCING . . . DR. BARUCH KANAEL

We are most pleased to feature an important article by the distinguished historian, archaeologist and numismatist Baruch Kanael. While Professor Kanael is well known in scholarly circles, unfortunately virtually none of his papers have been published in this country. We hope to rectify this oversight in the pages of THE AUGUR.

Kanael had the unique opportunity to study under some of the greatest scholars of the Twentieth Century, including cultural sociology under Martin Buber and archaeology under Professor Sukenik (discoverer of the Dead Sea Scrolls). His numerous articles have appeared in the Israel Exploration Journal, Jewish Quarterly Review, Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research, Israel Numismatic Bulletin, The Biblical Archaeologist, et al.

From 1949-1950, as Inspector of Holy Sites in Israel, Dr. Kanael took part in the survey of Moslem religious shrines; he later led two survey expeditions to ancient synagogues in Galilee and the Golan Heights (1968-1969).

Mel Wacks NLG
Editor

Anchor/"Sun-Wheel" bronze coin of Alexander Jannaeus (Wacks 15).

Coin of the Month

SO—CALLED "SUN-WHEEL" COIN SYMBOL OF ALEXANDER JANNAEUS

The anchor/sun-wheel coin type is unique to the Hasmonean Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC). Neither symbol is particularly "Jewish" . . . the anchor was borrowed from Seleucid Syrian coins, such as the bronze struck in Jerusalem by Antiochus VII in 132/1 BC; the source of the so-called "sun-wheel" is not so obvious.

This "sun-wheel" may have from 6 to 8 spokes (or rays) and comes in two major varieties - one with an outer rim and letters between the rays (Wacks 15), and the other with a unique Square (e.g. modern) Hebrew inscription surrounding the rays (Wacks 16). Since these two variations obviously are meant to represent the same symbol, a wheel is ruled out by the lack of a rim on the latter type. Thus we are left with the choice of either a sun-symbol or a star.

Messrs. Thomas and Garner advanced the sun-symbol theory in the late 19th Century, and were supported by Madden.

Roman Denarii featuring the Dioscuri, circa 2nd century B.C.

Arie Kindler has indicated that the origin of the star motif can be found in Seleucid Syrian coins, where it originally was associated with the cult of the Dioscuri. The Dioscuri, according to ancient myths, were the horse-tamer Castor and Polydeuces, master of the art of boxing. Zeus, in reward for their show of brotherly love, set them in the sky as the constellation Gemini - the morning and evening stars. Temples were established for their worship, and the Festival of the Dioscuri was celebrated at Rome with great splendor on the Ides of Quinctilis (July 15).

Another possible Dioscuri star can be found on a Judaean coin of Herod the Great (37-4 BC), Wacks 28.

Of course there is always the possibility that the star-like design was meant to be more decorative than symbolic. The technique of interspersing ancient Hebrew letters within a star can be found earlier on an embossed storage jar handle found at Ramat-Rahel, dating to the 4th Century BC; the inscription reads "Jerusalem."

The renegade but imaginative numismatist Wolf Wirgin published several 3rd Century BC Etruscan bronze coins that bear remarkable resemblances to both sides of Jannaeus' anchor/star types issued more than a century later. The comparison of the letters within the star-rays is particularly uncanny. Wirgin writes, "The migration of symbols that is documented on the Etruscan and Jewish coins shows a knowledgeable relationship between the Jews and Romans at a very early time."

3rd Century B.C. Italian Judean - look-alike bronze coin.

Somewhat later (c. 50 BC - 70 AD), similar star designs are found engraved as decorations on ossuaries (burial boxes) found around Jerusalem.

The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion reveals that, "Like all sciences in ancient and medievel times astronomy was studied for its religious implications - but for the Jews there was never any question of star-worship; the stars as part of the heavenly host are themselves conceived as worshipping God." The Biblical prophesy, "there shall come a star out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17), that influenced Simon Bar Kochba 200 years later, may have also inspired the Maccabean Alexander Jannaeus. So perhaps the Hasmonean coin star-symbol did have some religious connotation.

The inscription within the star's rays on our coin is יהונתן המלך "Yehonatan Hamelech . . . Yehonatan the King."

This sharp specimen, with most of the inscription readable, was photographed by BNS Charter Member Robert Webber. Our thanks to Bob for making it available to us. (M. Wacks)

THE TRANSITION FROM PRIESTLY PREDOMINANCE TO LAY PREDOMINANCE IN THE LIGHT OF ANCIENT JEWISH COINAGE

By Baruch Kanael

In Old Testament times, since Saul, David and Solomon, Judaea was a monarchy. The High Priest of Aaronite descent was an important royal official, but not much more. From the time of King Solomon this dignity was vested with the High Priest Zadok and his descendants.

The high priest, detail from a woodcut in *Liber Chronicarum*, fol. 33, by Hartmann Schedel, printed by Anton Koberger, Nuremberg, 1493.

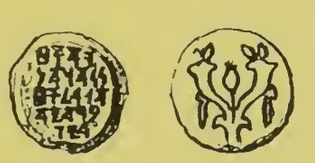
After Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians in B.C. 586, and the Jews were carried into the Babylonian captivity, the pre-eminence of the Royal family in Judaea ceased. Temporal and spiritual leadership were now vested with the Zadokite High Priest. The period of priestly pre-eminence now starts in Judaea and the Davidic Dynasty were now supposed to take over the supreme power only in the messianic age.

However, already in the Persian Period a contest is conspicuous between the priests and the scribes for leadership in the country. A scribe might also - as in the case of Esdras - be of priestly descent, but this was not a prerequisite for fulfilling this task.

As a result of the temporal power concentrated in their hands, the priestly hierarchy became worldly, and the appointed guardians to the ancestral heritage became ultimately the leaders of the hellenizing party. This culminated with the enforcement of a syncretistic cult (e.g. Greek & Jewish) in Jerusalem under the Syrian King Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Here the Zadokite High Preists were the leaders of the apostasy.

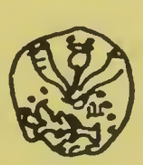
This brought about the Maccabean revolt. The Maccabeans were a rural priestly family, who did not belong to the aristocracy. Ultimately they succeeded in seizing the High Priestly office and the rule of the country. However, once in power, they did not stay long as champions of the orthodox cause. The Hassideans had by now developed into the Pharisean movement. Their adversaries were the worldly Sadducees, led by the priestly aristocracy. When, under John Hyrcanus I (135-104 B.C.) the Maccabeans did forsake the Pharisees and joined the Sadducees and even persecuted the former. The rift between Priests and Pharisees widened and the prestige of the Priests as leaders of the elected nation declined.

The Maccabeans were therefore interested to emphasize the importance of their High Priestly dignity on their coins. Most Maccabean rulers strove at least formally for concord with the majority of the people led by the Pharisees: they were therefore careful to issue coins in which an equilibrium was preserved between the High Priest and his council (Hever Hayehudim), in which the Parisees were represented. Therefore, on the coins of Hyrcanus I the inscription reads: "Yehohanan the High Priest and the council of the Jews", within the wreath. On the reverse we find jugate cornucopiae between which there appears a pomegranate. The pomegrantate in my opinion is a symbol of the High Priestly dignity.



Coin attributed to John Hyrcanus I

The second Maccabean ruler to issue coins was Judas Aristobulus I (104-103 B.C.). although we know from Josephus Flavius that he assumed the Diadem, he refrained from marking the constitutional change on his coins. Most Maccabean rulers strove at least formally for continued. Alexander Jannaeus also followed the same policy in the beginning of his rule. Later on we find the title and symbols of royalty on his coins a matter to which there seems to have been much popular antagonism. It seems likely that in his last issue a part of the coins were overstruck with the former inscription (Yonathan the High Priest and the council of the Jews) and symbols (cornucopiae and pomegranate). His last series again bear only the traditional legend and symbols.



Overstruck coin of Alexander Jannaeus

The same is true of the coins of Hyrcanus II, who was a devoted champion to the Pharisaic cause.

Of much interest to our topic are the exceedingly rare "Menorah" coins of the last Maccabean king. Matathias Antigonus (40-37 B.C.). Antigonus had been installed by the Parthians who for a short period had succeeded in conquering Syria and Asia Minor. However, Herod, the son of Antipater, Hyrcannus' Minister in Chief succeeded to be appointed King of Judaea by the Romans and with their help he conquered Jerusalem in 37 B.C. Possibly in his last year, Antigonus made use of his coins for propaganda when his position became critical. He relinquished the hitherto usually faint symbolism on the Maccabean coins, and started a series of expressive coins. On them we see the seven branched candlestick (Menorah) and the table of shew-bread. These are clear expressions of his High Priesthood. His purpose in issuing these coins was to stress the values for which he was contending against the Romans and Herod, their nominee.

It appears, however, that the prestige of the High - Priesthood had already suffered greatly, since evidently Antigonus too was an adherent of the Sadducees.

A hundred years elapsed, until we again find Hebrew coins. The coins of the Herodians and the Roman Procurators can hardly be classified by their inscriptions and symbols as Jewish coins.

In the hundred intervening years the prestige of the High-Priesthood continued to decline: the Herodians and the Procurators had taken measures to reduce the prestige and the influence of the High Priest: they removed the Maccabeans from this dignity and appointed High Priests from abroad and from undistinguished families. Futhermore, while High Priests formerly had the tenure of office for life, they were now exchanged frequently. The High Priests still were mostly Sadducees, which also did not add to their popularity.

A compromise was then found by the Pharisees: even a Sadducee High Priest had to follow Pharisaic procedure while officiating.

When the first revolt against the Romans broke out in A.D. 66, it so happened, that the High Priestly families headed the government set up by the insurgents, although these very same circles were those who had tried to prevent its outbreak, regarding an insurrection against the Romans as hopeless from the beginning.

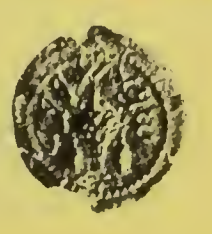
The temporary government issued coins already in A.D. 66 - namely, silver shekels to replace the Tyrian shekels. On the obverse we find a chalice, and the inscription: Shekel of Israel.

On the reverse we see three pomegranates on stem and the inscription: Jerusalem the Holy.

I would suggest to see in the chalice a symbol of the priestly office: perhaps the one used for the water libation of the Festival of Tabernacles which takes place in Autumn. Then prayers are offered in supplication for rain. This ceremony was opposed by the Sadducees while it was very popular with the Pharisees. Its depiction on the coins would therefore allude to the concord between High Priests and Pharisees. This harmony, as pointed out above, existed perhaps in letter, but hardly in spirit.

The pomegranate, as already mentioned, seems to be a high-priestly symbol.

An important change appears on the bronze coins of the year A.D. 69. These coins, in my opinion, were issued by the party of Simon bar Gioras. This faction had not been able to conquer the Temple Mount where the silver shekels were issued. On the most common variety of these coins the chalice depicted on the shekels appears, but the symbol on the reverse is new in Hebrew coinage: a bundle of twigs (lulab) and two citrons (ethrogim).



The lulab and ethrog were carried in procession round the altar on the festival of Tabernacles, while supplicating for rain. Rain obviously was most important for the Jews in antiquity, who were predominantly farmers.

This was the only procession at the Temple, at which laymen also took part. I would therefore suggest, that Bar Giora, who had to encamp outside the Temple enclosure, stressed on his coins the fact that the functions in the Temple were not exclusively a prerogative of the priests. It stresses the importance of layment even in the domian of Temple worship. In the synagogue (already an important part of Israelite life in that period) the part played by priests was largely of secondary nature.

It is likely that this trend is even more apparent on the coins of the Second Revolt led by Simon bar Cocheba, the "Son of Star", against Hadrian in A.D. 132-135. On some coins of the first year of the insurrection Eleazar the Priest - obviously the High Priest designate - figures on coins. The name of Simon the Nassi (prince), appears more often than Eleazar on the bronze coins of he first year of the revolt. In the two following years of the revolt the name of Eleazar appears only exceptionally while that of Simon appears frequently.

It is plausible, that the most significant symbols of the insurgents are to be looked for on the Tetradrachms. The symbolic importance of the denarii and bronze coins seems to be of subsidiary nature. Thus on the obverse of the Tetradrachms appears the front of the Temple, which the insurgents had hoped to rebuild, with a Thora shrine probably substituting for the Holy Ark. On the reverse we find again the ethrog and lulab. The lulab is here depicted according to the view of Rabbi Akibah, the celebrated Pharisaic sage who upheld Bar Cocheba's Messianic claims.

The destruction of the Temple did not harm Judaism in a sever measure since leadership had already largely passed into the hands of the Rabbis. Now, when the insurgents hoped to rebuild the Temple, the importance of the High Priest was diminished and the participation of laymen in the Temple cult was enhanced by the insurgents.

Thus the coins seem to reflect the transition from priestly predominance to lay rule in ancient Judaea; this was an important factor contributing to the continuation of the existence of Judaism after Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Romans.

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Bibliophile Corner

SAMARIA

John Yonge Akerman amplified the Biblical reference to Samaria in his 1846 work NUMISMATIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: "Then cometh he (Jesus) to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar . . . The woman saith unto him . . . Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:5, 19-20).

Although Josephus, himself a Jew, gives us a very unfavourable picture of the Samaritans, there is no reason for doubting its accuracy. According to that historian, the Samaritans were ever ready to change their religion and their customs, when advantages tempted or danger threatened them. When Alexander granted to the Jews immunities and privileges, these people, whose capital was Shechem, invited him to come to Mount Gerizim and do honour to their temple, as he had done to that of Jerusalem, alleging that they were of the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh; but, being pressed to say if they were really Jews, and not Sidonians, they answered that they were Hebrews, but had the name of Sidonians, living at Shechem. Alexander dismissed them, saying, that what he had granted was to the Jews; but, that, if he afterwards found they were of that stock, he would consider their petition. At a later period, we learn from the same authority, that when the Syrian king Antiochus pillaged Jerusalem, and inflicted horrible tortures on its inhabitants, the Samaritans protested that they were not of Jewish origin, but Sidonians, and entreated that they might be permitted to dedicate their temple, hitherto without a name, to Jupiter Hellenius.

By the reign of the Roman Emperor Antonius Pius (138-161 AD), the Samaritan Temple at the top of Mt. Gerizim had long since been replaced by a pagan Roman temple, and this is the one shown on the coin. When Emperor Hadrian had attempted to similarly build a heathen temple on the site of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem it led to the Second Revolt.

In 1970 there were a total of 430 Samaritans, all in Israel. This represents a positive trend, as only 160 were counted in the Palestine census of 1881.

The reverse inscription of this bronze, issued by Antonius Pius, gives the name of the Samarian city Flavia Neapolis (ΦΛ NEACΠOΛEΩC), and more interestingly has one of the earliest numismatic references to the name Palestine (ΠΤΑΛΑICTINHC) in Syria (CYPIAC).